Pəskehtəkʷok

Joining of the Branches

Photo: Martin Neptune

Spring 2006 ~ Issue 1

Penobscot Indian Nation
Department of Natural Resources
www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNR1.htm

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VERNAL POOL TIME

Text for this article was taken directly from the Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IFW) poster on vernal pools, their fact sheets on particular species, and Maine Audubon documents and web pages.

May flowers are not all that April's showers bring in the northeast. Spring rains and warm temperatures also herald spectacular, though often unseen, wildlife migrations. On the first warm rainy evenings of spring, legions of wood frogs and salamanders emerge from their deep, leafy forest retreats to hop and crawl toward small woodland pools. This marks one of the first signs that spring has finally arrived.

Vernal pools get their name from the Latin word for spring, ***vernalis***.

Vernal pools are small isolated wetlands, usually not connected to streams or larger wetlands, that are filled by spring rains and melting snow but often dry out by late summer. In the spring, these ephemeral spring wetlands explode with the sounds and sights of ducks, frogs, salamanders, turtles, dragonflies, water beetles, and other creatures. With the onset of summer, pools become surprisingly dormant, providing few clues about the excitement that occurred just weeks earlier.

What makes these temporary wetlands unique is that absence of fish. Some animals - such as wood frogs, spotted salamanders, spadefoot toads, and fairy shrimp - are defenseless against fish predators and breed most successfully in fishless environments. Though safe from fish, animals that breed in vernal pools

must contend with the drying clock of summer. During drought years, pool-breeding species may suffer catastrophic losses if their habitat dries up too soon.

In addition to the species dependent upon these pools for successful reproduction, vernal pools are also used for feeding and resting by many other animals, such as spring peepers and grey tree frogs, even though they can successfully reproduce in permanent waters or other aquatic habitats.

SPOTTED SALAMANDERS

- These salamanders are also called mole salamanders because of the burrowing habits of adults who live most of their lives underground in root cavities and the burrows of small mammals. They may live as deep as three feet below ground.
- Adult salamanders emerge on the first relatively warm rainy nights of early spring.
- It is estimated that most animals return to the pools from which they emerged.
- Male salamanders migrate to the breeding pool first and wait for the females to arrive.
- Adult salamanders will migrate up to one-half mile to reach breeding pools.
- The eggs are generally laid in gelatinous masses attached to vegetation in the water.
- The eggs hatch in three to eight weeks. The larvae are entirely aquatic and breathe with external gills. They gradually develop legs and jaws during their time in the pool.
- Larvae are carnivorous, eating insect larvae, small crustaceans, and aquatic worms. Under crowded conditions, larvae may become cannibalistic.
- After two or three months (usually between July and September), they transform into young adults. When they have lost the last traces of their gills, they leave the pool to begin the next phase of their lives.
- Salamanders may live up to 15-20 years.

SPOTTED TURTLES

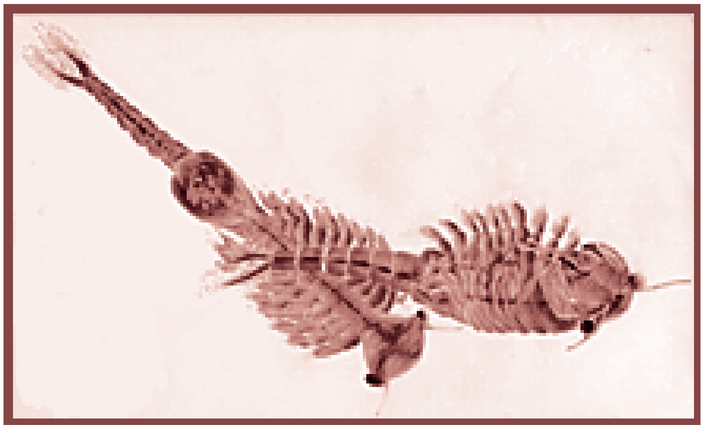
- These turtles emerge in April.
- They eat amphibian eggs and larvae (tadpoles). This abundant food supply is critical to their survival because they likely consume much of their yearly food needs in May and June.

- They travel an average of 3/4 mile per year and use up to 3 different wetlands.
- They attain sexual maturity at 7-10 years of age.
- Mating occurs from March to May.
- Nests are often concentrated in human-created habitats where nest loss may be high from predators or road grading.
- Incubation time depends on soil temperature, but typically lasts 88-125 days and hatching occurs in September and October. Eggs may not hatch in cold, wet summers.
- Hatchlings probably overwinter in nearby wetlands but little is known of their habitat use and movements until they become adults.
- As vernal pools dry and food supplies diminish, adults may wait-it-out in upland areas in late summer. During this time they burrow into forest leaf litter within 260 feet of the nearest wetland.
- When fall rains come they move to wetlands for hibernation - sometimes communally.

WOOD FROGS

- Wood frogs rouse from hibernation sites and begin their annual migration to breeding ponds when melting snow and spring rains saturate the ground (some males move closer to breeding pools to hibernate in the fall).
- Although spring peepers are more familiar as harbingers of spring, wood frogs often appear first. Remarkably adapted to the cold, it is not unusual to find the earliest migrants swimming where ice remains in the water nearby.
- Wood frog calling, mating, and egg-laying occur mainly in the early night hours and gradually diminish toward dawn. Calling and breeding activity also occurs during the day in undisturbed locations.
- Wood frogs are described as explosive breeders because the entire sequence of appearance, mating, egg laying and return to the terrestrial habitat is accomplished in a very brief time. This may be as short as a week in some pools but, in rare instances, may extend up to 30 days.
- The emerging tadpoles transform into adults some 6 to 15 weeks later.
- Young tadpoles feed on algae and microorganisms scraped from aquatic vegetation. They may also feed on spotted and blue spotted salamander eggs. As they grow older, some other plant and animal matter is consumed.
- Adults summer in cool, moist woods and consume a wide variety of invertebrates including slugs, spiders, and worms.
- Wood frogs live from 3-5 years.
- Little is known about the ecological role of wood frogs in upland forests. However, they are present in large numbers in northeastern woodlands.

- Given their abundance and diet of forest invertebrates, it is likely that wood frogs influence decomposition rates and nutrient cycling in upland forests.



FAIRY SHRIMP

- Fairy shrimp are small crustaceans restricted to vernal pools.
- They are greatly restricted seasonally. Their temperature tolerance is limited to 40 to 60°F (4 to 20°C).
- They appear soon after spring thaw and disappear with the onset of warm, summer weather leaving behind resistant eggs that carry the species over to the next favorable period. The resting egg (actually a developing embryo) has a dark covering and is able to survive drying, extreme heat, freezing and ingestion by birds.
- Reflooding the following spring stimulates hatching.
- Adult fairy shrimp may persist into the summer season but are usually difficult to find after May.
- Fairy shrimp typically have one generation per wet episode.
- Fairy shrimp do not occur in all vernal pools. Even within one pool, shrimp may occur with regularity for many years, only to disappear in others, even under seemingly favorable conditions.
- The habitat requirements for fairy shrimp are not well documented. Studies in Maine were not able to explain why fairy shrimp commonly occur in some pools and are absent from others.
- Fairy shrimp are known to be intolerant of pollution, siltation, salinity, high alkalinities, and temperatures in excess of 20 degrees Celcius.

RINGED BOGHAUNTER

- The ringed boghaunter is one of the rarest dragonflies in North America.
- It is currently believed that they are at their northern extent of their range in southwestern Maine.
- They are the first dragonflies to emerge in early spring.
- The flight period begins in late April to Early May and extends to mid-June.
- Adults are typically observed in forested areas up to 1/3 mile from breeding wetlands.
- They feed on small insects and mature for a week or two before returning to the wetlands to breed.
- They are docile and easily approached, sometimes landing on observers.
- Adults at breeding wetlands are not territorial.
- Eggs hatch in summer and the larvae crawl out of the water onto plants, split their larval skins, and fly away as immature adults.

IMPORTANCE OF VERNAL POOLS

In addition to being vital habitat for local plants and animals, vernal pools are important landscape features. If we think of them as wetland islands in a sea of upland forests, we see that groups of pools form stepping stones of hospitable habitat along which wetland-dependent wildlife may travel. Animals may skip over one pool to find more suitable habitat elsewhere. If the wetland mosaic of pools in an upland matrix is destroyed, wildlife populations may be isolated and more vulnerable to changes in their surroundings.

Less certain than the rain, however, is whether vernal pools themselves will survive to greet another spring migration. Residential development, urban sprawl, roads, and pollution are harming or destroying vernal pools. Luckily, people are becoming more aware of the beauty and diversity of vernal pools, and how to recognize and protect them.

> *Vernal pool amphibians and reptiles require several hundred feet of mostly undisturbed upland habitat surrounding the pool basin to ensure their continued existence.*

In Spring, 1999, a vernal pool volunteer monitoring program was initiated by Maine Audubon Society and the University of Maine. The goal of this project is to collect long-term (a minimum of three years) biological data on pools, to make this data accessible to the public through development of a web page database and to begin mapping vernal pools on a GIS-mapping database.

For more information on vernal pools please check out the following resources:

Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
www.state.me.us/ifw/index.html
Do a search for vernal pools

Maine Audubon Very Important Pools
www.maineaudubon.org/conserve/citsci/vip.shtml
www.maineaudubon.org/conserve/citsci/v_guide.pdf

Warning!

Guidelines for eating fish from Penobscot Territory Waters

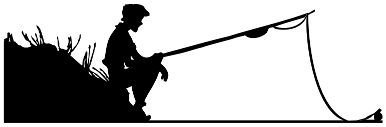
To prevent possible harm from mercury, dioxins, and PCBs due to eating freshwater fish, we offer this advice:

All children under 8 and women who are nursing, pregnant or could become pregnant,

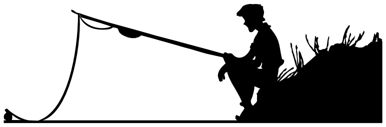
the most sensitive population from health effects of mercury,

should eat ***NO FISH***
from Penobscot Nation Territory waters

If you are eating fish: small trout and salmon are safer choices than large bass and pickerel.



EVERYONE ELSE who is taking fish from



on the Penobscot River below Mattaseunk Dam (Mattawamkeag)

OR

anywhere else, where you are taking...

… Brook trout, ***OR*** Any

You should eat NO more than ***1 meal per month.***

This advisory is for protection from dioxins and PCBs.

You should eat NO more than ***1 meal per week.***

These advisories are for protection from mercury.

You should eat NO more than ***2 meals per month.***

For questions or more information: Penobscot DNR 207.827.7776, x. 7361

Photo: Martin Neptune

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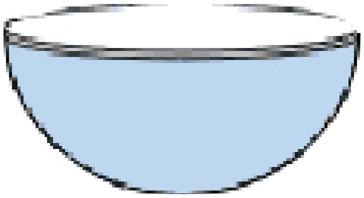
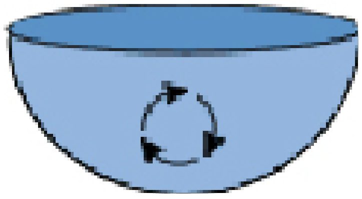
What Happens During and After Ice-out on a Lake?!

Remember why ice floats? Back in Issue 2 of the Winter 2005 DNR newsletter we described the fact that water differs from most other compounds because it is less dense as a solid than as a liquid. So as long as the air temperatures at the surface of a lake stay below freezing the water on the top will be less dense than the water below and continue to float. In fact, near the end of winter, the water near a lake's bottom will usually be at 4°C and water above that layer will be cooler, approaching 0°C just under the ice.



But as we know so well, in the spring things warm up! When this happens the ice melts. The surface water heats up and therefore it decreases in density. When the temperature (density) of the surface water equals the bottom water, very little wind energy is needed to mix the lake completely. This is called turnover. For a while winds may still mix the lake from bottom to top, but eventually the upper water becomes too warm and too buoyant to mix completely with the denser deeper water.



Also as we mentioned in the article last winter, if there are low levels of oxygen in the bottom waters of a lake during the winter it can result in a release of phosphorus from the sediments. When a lake turns over in the spring, this phosphorus provides a food source for all plant life present like those that either grow from roots in the sediment or float on the surface (macrophytes) and still others that float in the water column (phytoplankton). Large amounts, or blooms, of phytoplankton in the summer can also result in fatally low levels of oxygen.

Look for future articles on what is happening during the summer!

Conservation Camp Time Again!

It's that time of year again. The Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District is having their annual "Conservation Camps." This is a great opportunity for **children ages 7 to 10** an opportunity to explore the natural resources of the region and have fun learning!

MORNING SESSIONS:
9:00 am - noon

THE FIRST WEEK OF CAMP: JUNE 26 - JUNE 30
NATURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITIES

GATHERING LOCATION: Foxcroft Academy Student Center, Dover-Foxcroft

AGENDA

Monday:
Subject - Entomology
Entomologist Clay Kirby, from University of Maine, will present a slide show about insects and how to capture them, allow the children to handle various specimens, and, weather allowing, take the children outdoors to catch and release insects native to our own backyards.

Tuesday:
Subject - Soils
More hands-on learning when Soil Scientist Ron Olson, of Natural Resources Conservation Service, teaches the kids how to dig a soil pit in the forest.

Wednesday:
Subject - Forestry
Gordon Moore, of the Maine Forest Service, will teach the children how to measure trees to estimate their age and how to identify different types of trees.

Thursday:
Subject - Water Quality
Dan Kusnierz, Water Resources Program Manager for the Penobscot Indian Nation, will speak about water quality and the kinds of critters that live in and near healthy waters.

Friday:
Subject - Wildlife
Learn about pelts, skulls and tracks with Doug Kane of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

REGISTER NOW!
Enrollment limited to 30 per session

THE SECOND WEEK OF CAMP: JULY 10 - JULY 14
AGRICULTURAL TOURS

GATHERING LOCATION: Foxcroft Academy Student Center, Dover-Foxcroft

AGENDA

Monday: Buffalo & maple syrup at Breakneck Ridge in Blanchard.
Tuesday: Pick new crops at Stutzman's Vegetable Farm, Sangerville
Wednesday: Learn about raising game birds at Three Rivers Wing Shoot in Milo.
Thursday: See cows, calves and the milking process, Gilrock Dairy Farm, Sangerville.
Friday: Learn about horse care and equestrian skill at Infinity Farm, Dover-Foxcroft

Enrollment in the district would have been limited to fewer children without the many donations of time, money and supplies from the community including:

- Funds and materials that make it possible for the children to create natural resource-based crafts during camp are supplied, in part, by Palmyra Wal-Mart.
- Save-a-Lot Food Store in Dover-Foxcroft and Horizon Organics are providing snacks.
- The Milo Garden Club and Dover-Foxcroft Kiwanis also assist in providing funding for this camp.
- The guest speakers who donate their time to put on presentations, farm families willing to open their homes to the children and parents able to help provide supervision.

COST: $25 per child per week. PIN DNR may be able to help with expenses for Penobscot Tribal community members. Please call Dan at 817-7361 for info.
REGISTRATION: Fill out the form included on the next page and send to the address listed. Call 564-2321, ext. 3 with questions.

Children should wear sturdy shoes that can get muddy - AVOID OPEN-TOED SHOES!
Water bottles, sun screen and insect repellent from home are welcomed.

CONSERVATION CAMP REGISTRATION

Please fill out this form and send it back with a check for $25 per child, per week, by June 21 to:

Piscataquis County SWCD
42 Pine Crest Drive
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

Parent/Guardian Name: ______________________________

Address: ____ Email: ______________________

Phone#: __________________________ Emergency Phone #: ________________

Child/Children's Name:	Age

Does your child have any medical conditions that we should be aware of (i.e. diabetes, asthma, allergies, etc.)?
Yes_______ No ______
If yes, please exlain:

____

____

Parents and friends are welcome to attend.

If your child requires a behavioral specialist while in school, please provide adult supervision on the days he or she attends camp.

Due to the risk of Hoof & Mouth Disease, students who have been out of the country 2 weeks prior to summer camp will not be able to participate on the Agricultural Tours.

The Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District, program presenters and Agricultural Tour farm owners will not be held responsible for injuries or damages.
Please do not send your child to camp in open-toed shoes for their own safety. Shoes that can get wet are recommended for Water Quality Day.
Discipline policy: Our rules are simple. Be polite to the guest speakers. Don't do anything that could hurt you or somebody else, such as running, throwing rocks, swinging sticks. Any child who cannot follow the rules after verbal warnings will be asked to skip the next day of camp. If they still can't follow the rules upon their return, they will be asked to leave the camp for the week.

_ _

Which week/program would your child be interested in: **Check one or both**

June 26 – June 30	Natural Resources	_______
July 10- July 14	Agriculture Tours	_______

For more information, please call 564-2321, ext. 3

Would any adults be attending the tours: Yes____ No____ How Many ____
Would you be willing to volunteer on certain days to supervise: Yes___ No ____
Do we have permission to photograph your child for possible publication in local newspapers event posters and District newsletters: Yes____ No_____

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Guidelines for eating fish from Penobscot Territory Waters

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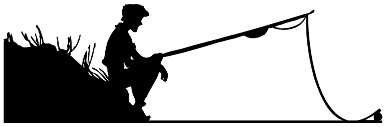

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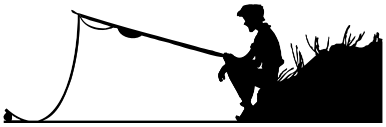

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PIN Water Resources Goes Digital!

There wasn't much time to write articles this summer because the Water Resources staff were so busy working on our new all-digital data entry process. From start to finish we have eliminated the use of paper forms and notebooks. This process will make the analysis of data and report creation happen much sooner. And with more timely reports we will be able to better assess problems on the river when they happen - instead of years later.

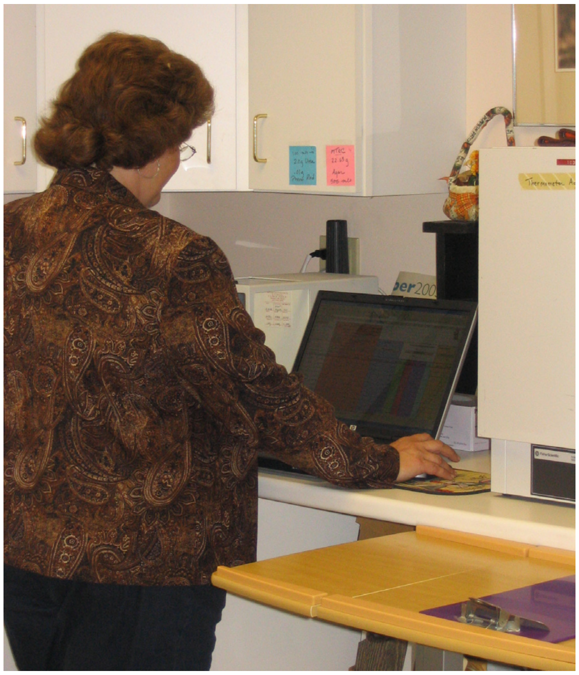
Jan enters data from the field into a form on the mobile digital assistant (MDA). Each MDA has its own waterproof hard case to keep it dry and prevent breakage if it gets wet or dropped.

The data entry process starts in the field with a mobile digital assistant (MDA). Field staff download onto their personal MDA a form for the day and run they are doing. When in the field they open this file and enter all of the information they collect at each site including various conditions of the river and direct measurements of different water quality indicators. Every once in a while field staff email a copy of this information back to the office from the MDA so that we have a backup copy in case something happens

When asked about how she feels about the new process, Jan Paul says "I love it. It makes my a job a lot easier - ten times quicker." And her favorite part about entering data this way is that it combines her phone/clock/data entry and backup mechanism into one unit. She appreciates that the data she collects cannot get lost as easily as pieces of paper can.

Jan uploads the days data to the workstation. After filtering bacteria samples she comes back to enter the relevant information about them.

Once Jan gets back to the office after a run she can upload to a computer workstation the data she collected that day. Other information is added after she gets done filtering her bacteria samples. After entering all of the necessary data from the field the file is then ready for the laboratory!



Rhonda Daigle works at the laboratory laptop to enter data about weights of filters that assess the total suspended solids

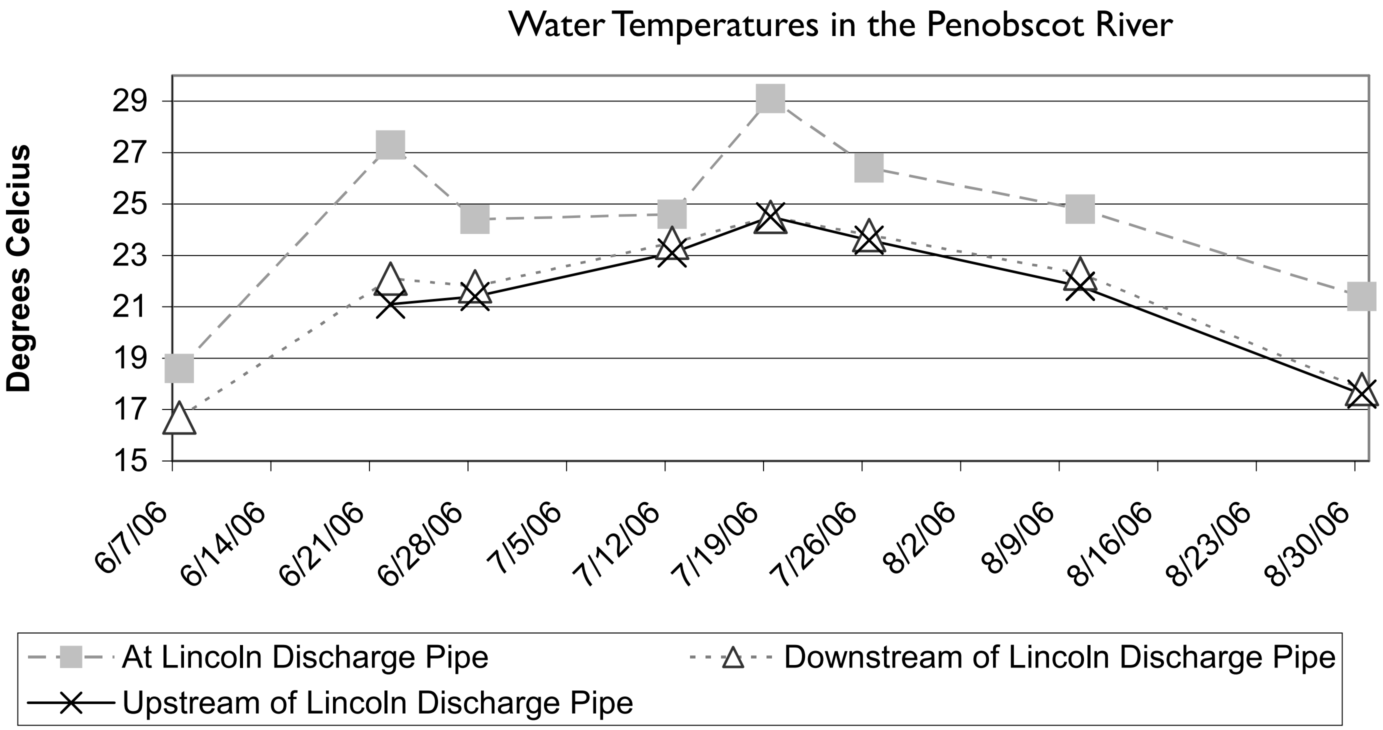
All of the field data files are linked directly to the laboratory data files - but separated so that each staff can work on their respective parts at the same time. Rhonda Daigle brings the laboratory laptop around to the different analytical equipment as she works. She can have multiple files open so that she can work on lakes, rivers or tributaries at the same time. And the files can be focused on any one of the many different parameters that are measured.

With this new reporting mechanism we can report the following for the 2006 sampling season as of mid-September:

- 2,982 measurements were taken on river, tributary and lake sites (these include air temperature, water temperature, dissolved oxygen and secchi disk depth)
- More than 2,100 waters samples were collected in bottles to be analyzed by us or the Environmental Chemistry Laboratory at the University of Maine, and
- 2,730 laboratory measurements were made on samples brought in from the field.

The graph below shows some of the measurements made in the field. Here you can see the difference in water temperature between the site located at the Lincoln Paper and Tissue discharge pipe and sites up and down river of it. Ask any of the 8th grade class who visited there recently - they can tell you how warm or cold a sample of each feels. Thankfully the temperatures seem to be recovering from the addition of Lincoln's discharge of water that is warmer than what it would be naturally.

The Water Resources Program looks forward to collecting all of our future data this way and providing the Penobscot community with information on the health of the river and other water bodies on tribal land. If you ever have any questions about this work please feel free to call or visit us at the office.



Chronic Wasting Disease Testing at Penobscot Nation Tagging Stations

Kristin Dilworth, Big Game Biologist

Hunting season is underway, and the moose are starting to roll in!

As part of our wildlife program here at the Department of Natural Resources, we would like to opportunistically sample both moose and white-tailed deer again this year for Chronic Wasting Disease. We had an excellent sampling season last year, obtaining 18 samples (roughly 20% of the animals harvested). All samples tested negative for the disease, which is excellent! Hunter cooperation is crucial to the success of this study. We were extremely thankful for their cooperation last year, and are hoping for the same this season.

Chronic wasting disease is a TSE (transmissible spongiform encephalophy) of deer, elk and most recently, moose. TSE's are a number of diseases grouped together because of how they act and the symptoms they produce. Several other well known TSE's are mad-cow disease, scrapie (domestic sheep), transmissible mink encephalopathy (farmed mink) and in humans, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. All of these diseases are believed to be caused by "prions" which are infectious proteins that affect the brain and nervous system.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been known to be a syndrome of mule deer for more than 30 years. To date, it has been found to naturally affect mule deer, white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk and moose, though it is likely that other animals are susceptible to CWD. The origin of CWD is not known, and it may never be possible to determine how or when CWD arose. Scrapie has been recognized in the United States since 1947, and it is possible that CWD was derived from scrapie. However, this is only one of several hypotheses and arguments can be made for either side.
Clinical signs of CWD include the following symptoms:

- listlessness
- droopy ears
- lowered head
- excessive salivation
- teeth grinding and increased thirst
- extreme weight loss

CWD affected deer show loss of body condition and changes in behavior. Once the outward symptoms are obvious, the animal may have several days to several months to live.

Until recently, CWD has been a problem of the "western states." On April 27, 2005, the state of New York received a positive result for CWD in a wild deer sampled in Oneida County. This was a huge shock as the disease has not been found east of the Mississippi. The first moose to test positive was shot in Colorado last year as well, therefore we are choosing to test moose along with white-tailed deer. The state of Maine has been sampling deer since 2001, but until last year the Penobscot Nation territories have not had a sampling program of their own.

I would like to thank the hunters in advance for their continued cooperation! I look forward to seeing you this fall. If there are any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to email or call me at 817-7363, or kdilworth@penobscotnation.org.

Information taken from the CWD Alliance

Photo: Martin Neptune

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Joining of the Branches

Fall 2006 ~ Issue 2

Penobscot Indian Nation
Department of Natural Resources
www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNR1.htm

Phone Extensions

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John Banks, *DNR Director*	*7330*
Rhonda Daigle, *Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator*	*7326*
Kristin Dilworth, *Big Game Biologist*	*7363*
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Bill Thompson, *Air Quality Program*	*7340*
Binke Wang, *GIS Specialist*	*7341*
Water Resources Trainees	*7381*

PIN Water Resources Hosts Annual New England Tribal Environmental Training Conference

Join Us!

December 5 -7, 2006 at the Sockalexis Bingo Palace

This year's conference is focused on Tribal water quality and is open to everyone.

There will be plenty of opportunities to hear about tribal perspectives on water, the work that is being done by various tribal water programs and learn about efforts across the country on developing and enforcing tribal water quality standards. You can find all of the information about this conference at the following location on the PIN web site. The conference web pages are not linked from anywhere else so you will need this address in order to get there.

www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/Water/netetc/confhome.html

We respectfully request that you register if you will be attending any of the conference. It would be very helpful in our planning for us to have a relatively accurate head count. We have provided two ways that you can register:

1. Online at the conference web pages we have set up. You can either go to the home page at the address above and then click on Registration OR you can go directly to www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/Water/netetc/confreg.html
2. Pick up a copy of the registration form - a bunch of which will be tacked to the bulletin board outside of the main DNR office. Please provide the relevant information and return to Dan Kusnierz by either leaving it in his mailbox in the DNR copy room (the box will be below his name) or tacking it to the small cork board on his office door.

We would also love to have you join us at the traditional feast on Tuesday evening (Dec 5th)! There is no need to register for the feast but if you would like to bring even a small dish with you it would be greatly appreciated.

DONATIONS OF TRADITIONAL FOODS

Please contact Jan Paul at 817-7382 or 356-5019
if you can help provide any:
Moose meat
Deer meat
Fiddleheads
Muskrat
Salmon
Other traditional foods

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We are continuing to develop the agenda for the conference so it is best to check the web site for updates -
www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/Water/netetc/confagenda.html

As of now, the draft agenda looks like the following:

Tuesday, December 5, 2006
8:00 am Registration/Continental breakfast
10:00 am Welcoming/Opening Remarks

- John Banks, DNR Director
- Penobscot Chief Kirk Francis
- Ira Leighton, EPA Deputy Regional Administrator
- Invocation – Butch Phillips

10:30 am Tribal Elders talk about water and both the historic and current importance to Tribes
12:30 pm Lunch
1:30 pm Roundtable Discussion with Tribal Environmental Directors and EPA about the regional strategic plan Tribes agreed to, comparing this with the national EPA plan, current Tribal activities, what is EPA doing in the New England region, and how can EPA help tribes achieve their strategic goals.
7:00 pm Traditional Feast – hosted by Penobscot Indian Nation

Wednesday, December 6, 2006
8:00 am Continental breakfast/registration/Logistics
8:30 am Water Quality Standards Workshop

1. Presentation by Tribes with approved water quality standards - including Nancy Schuldt from Fond du Lac, Jim Piatt from the Pueblo of Isleta, and Paula Webster from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Flathead Reservation. This will include an overview of the process, more detail on designated uses and criteria for protecting uses, experiences and lessons learned. There will be discussion of areas of possible conflict with revealing cultural/religious practices when protecting uses.
2. Roundtable discussion between Tribes and EPA staff to talk about opportunities and challenges to development of water quality standards.
3. Roundtable discussion with Tribes interested in developing water quality standards and discussion of using Tribal businesses and labs for analyses.

Dinner – On your own
PM Movie Night: "Homeland" – portrait of four Indian tribes facing environmental challenges (optional)

Thursday, December 7, 2006
8:00 am Continental breakfast/registration/Logistics
8:30 am PIN Water Resources Data Management Work
9:30 am Tribal non-point source pollution projects
10:30 am Tribal Alternative Energy Projects - Steve Crawford, George Frantz
12:00 pm Closing prayer before lunch and heading out to field trip
12:15 pm Bag Lunch
12:45 pm Depart for Field Trip: PIN water projects / Penobscot River Restoration Project (via vans) depending on weather
5:00 pm Conference concludes

If you have any questions about the conference please feel free to contact
Dan Kusnierz at 817-7361, pinwater@penobscotnation.org
or
Angie Reed at 817-7360, areed@penobscotnation.org

Photo: Martin Neptune

Pəskehtəkʷok
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Winter 2006 ~ Issue 1

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ONE STEP CLOSER TO GETTING THOSE DAMS OUT -

PENOBSCOT NATION HELPS PUSH FOR REQUEST OF TEN MILLION FROM CONGRESS

"Nahmun stopped fishing for a moment and lay back in the canoe, watching the tops of the trees go silently by. As he drifted slowly along with the current, he recalled a story his father told him about the changes brought to the river by the European settlers many generations ago."

This Penobscot man, in a story written by tribal elder Butch Phillips, remembers when the Penobscot River was taking care of the people and all their relations. He also reflects on the change that was brought about since Europeans arrived. "The change had a drastic effect on the People and the creatures. The caribou and the beaver went away. The eagle and the osprey went away. The salmon, shad and alewives went away. The People went away from the river also. The sacred circle of life was broken. The ancestors witnessed the destruction, and they wept, but their tears couldn't flush the poisons from the river. Their protests could not stop the dams and mills or the increasing population along the river. With this change came a change to the way of life of the People and to their traditions as well."

However, like Nahmun, many modern-day tribal leaders continue to believe in the sacredness of the Penobscot River and continue to fight for her protection. Butch, as a Penobscot River Restoration Ambassador, and John Banks, as the Director of the Penobscot Nation's Department of Natural Resources, have been integral supporters of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (PRRT). The PRRT is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to implement the Penobscot River Restoration Agreement (**www.penobscotriver.org**) of purchasing and removing dams from the Penobscot River.

On January 26, 2007 it was announced that the Bush administration would be requesting $10 million from Congress to support this restoration project. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) requested this money in it's budget for next fiscal year, providing $8 million for dam acquisition and $2 million to NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation for technical assistance, pre- and post- removal studies, and engineering.

"For more than 10,000 years, the Penobscot River has been the heart of our homeland," said Penobscot Indian Nation Chief Kirk Francis. "Our identity as a tribe is deeply intertwined with the health of the river. The river's restoration is critical to our cultural survival. We commend the administration for its support for this and

Continued on next page

we express our appreciation to the Maine Congressional Delegation who have been so supportive and encouraged the Administration to continue funding this project."

"The White House and NOAA are indicating to Congress that the success of this innovative partnership among business, state, tribal and federal government, and citizens to restore the Penobscot River is of great national value," said Laura Rose Day, Executive Director, Penobscot River Restoration Trust. "Together, we will restore the Penobscot River system and in doing so we will renew fisheries, wildlife, and the cultural, recreational, economic and other values that the river can offer to the people of Maine and the nation. The Trust is thrilled that the Administration and NOAA are supporting this remarkable project. "

The Penobscot Trust holds an option to purchase the dams for approximately $25 million and is actively seeking acquisition funds from a combination of public and private sources. Over $7.5 million has been raised from private sources. Maine's Congressional Delegation has been instrumental in securing more than $4.5 million dollars in federal funds to date. Additional support has come from a wide array of supporters, including the state of Maine, tribes, businesses, and local, state and national organizations.

The members of the Penobscot Trust include the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited.

"This is perhaps the most important fresh-water restoration project underway in North America," said Michael Tetreault, Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy in Maine. "The benefits of the project are far reaching for species including federally endangered shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, river herring, striped bass, tomcod, rainbow smelt and Atlantic salmon. In this region where culture, tradition, business, and recreation all depend on a thriving Penobscot, the benefits to people will be tremendous."

Rose Day praised the "steadfast bipartisan support for the project and the continued leadership from the entire Maine delegation that has been critical to our attracting this type of significant federal commitment. Their support will make a difference to the future of this great Maine river."

In a press release, Senator Collins called the funding inclusion in the President's budget "excellent news that will help this extremely important project move forward." She noted that the $10 million in funding will provide significant federal cost-share and will help ensure improved access to nearly 1,000 miles of habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon and habitat access for other fish species will be improved.

"This announcement comes on the heels of news last week that the Penobscot River Restoration Project received a $1 million grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Wetlands Program and we are pleased with this demonstration of growing federal support for the project," said Senator Snowe.

"NOAA's commitment to this project is great news for the Penobscot River," stated Governor Baldacci. "The benefits of this landmark conservation project to the State of Maine are far reaching. It proves that we can balance fisheries conservation with our need of hydropower." The state has committed to seek $3-5 million to help communities in the region reap many anticipated benefits of the restored river.

Continued on next page

In Butch’s story, Nahmun reflects on this kind of progress. “Finally people were becoming aware of the serious destruction to the river. They came to understand what the Native People had been telling them for so long. ‘If you cause harm to Mother Earth, you will eventually cause harm to mankind.’ A serious effort had begun to reverse the damage to the river. The beaver, eagle and osprey came back and the People came back to the river also. Efforts are underway to remove two dams and to improve another so the sea-run fish can once again enter reservation waters on their way to their ancient spawning areas. The young Indian man thought how happy the ancestors must be to see the river cleansing itself and to see the people once again traveling up river to hunt fish and gather plants.

Nahmun thought to himself. How can the ancestors be happy. They remember when unknown diseases killed so many of our people nearly four hundred years ago, and there are still unseen poisons in the river that are causing suffering for the People. Dioxin, mercury and cadmium are in the flesh of the fish and game that cause sickness and death to the people. Nahmun held up a two pound bass for a few moments before releasing it. He thought about the present dangers that still exist from eating the fish from these waters. There have been great strides to restore this river and we can be proud of the many accomplishments, but until we can safely eat the fish again as our ancestors did, the precious Circle of Life of this river will not be completed.

Nahmun carefully released the bass back into the river and as it swam away, he said to the fish, ‘Woli Woni’ (Thank You). And all my Relations, ‘Woli Woni.’”

Art: James Eric Francis

Green Cleaning Tip

Cleaning appliances and ovens without the use of harsh chemicals can be as easy as this:

Salt
Hot water

Pour salt and hot water over grease and grime. Let sit for a couple of hours or overnight before scrubbing with a mild abrasive pad. Pour salt directly onto the grease when freshly spilled and come back to it later.